



P.O. Box 760042  
Lathrup Village, MI 48076

# Cambridge Village ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER

Official Newsletter of the Cambridge Village Association

Spring 2013

### ANNUAL MEETING 2013

The annual gathering of the Cambridge Village Association will be held this year on **Wed. May 15, 2013** at the city of Southfield's Park and Recreation building at 7:15 pm. Each attendee will receive a nice souvenir to commemorate our 60<sup>th</sup> year (the first houses were built and advertised in 1953). There will be the usual discussion of issues and a vote for board members. Remember, to vote you must have paid your dues for 2013 (\$10 per year). It is a good opportunity to come together and share information with fellow neighbors.

### INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT CAMBRIDGE VILLAGE

- Land was a farm owned by the Taylor family, adjacent to the already settled Lathrup Village, which was also first planned to just be a subdivision (though it was referred to as "Lathrup Town Site"). Elizabeth A. Taylor is shown as owner of Cambridge land in 1908. Just north [of what would be "Catalpa"] was the Lewis Haack Dairy Farm.
- Lathrup Village started taking off in 1928, 25 years before Cambridge, but was still under active construction while Cambridge was under construction.
- Lathrup promoted Sunset Boulevard, which would have crossed at the corner of our sub through Sunnybrook, as a major boulevard running from Meyers/Eight Mile northwesterly through Lathrup, and beyond to the lakes country. (note: this did *not* come to pass).
- Cambridge is, we believe, the oldest builder's sub in Southfield (planned and built from models by Rodney Lockwood). Magnolia is considered the first planned sub, but those were custom homes. Their homeowners association was founded in 1940, and rallied against an airport planned at the armory on 8 Mile/Coolidge.
- There are 288 homes built, and many homes are not on the original lots...from inception to completion, the size of homes grew as did the lot sizes, so the original plan was for more small homes, but the reality was that the homes got bigger, and could not fit on the original lots.
- Cambridge is likely the first sub in Southfield to offer a grand front main entrance, curvilinear streets, and courts.
- The original street signs were quaint wooden signs, and were replaced in the 1970s with city signs.
- The first homes were available in early 1953, and most were built by 1956; Shagbark first, Spring Arbor last. However, one house was actually built in 1968!
- Houses had "country style" criss-cross fences made of wood, which delineated lots but were mostly decorative.
- Exact replicas of selected CV houses can be found in Beverly Hills (s. of 14 Mile, w. of Greenfield) as Lockwood was building there concurrently (they were more expensive even then). A few similar homes can be found n. of Maple, w. of Coolidge in Birmingham.
- Cranbrook Village north of 12 Mile was developed on a much larger scale after the success of Cambridge Village, about 1956 through about 1970.
- Builder Lockwood was an early adopter of "Rockcrete", poured-in-place concrete walls for many of our homes.
- Fireplaces, extensive overhangs, attached garages, wood windows, and sloped ceilings were somewhat unusual for homes of modest size and scope, but common to CV homes.
- The homes themselves represent a variety of mid-century modern, traditional, and California contemporary styles, also unusual for modest properties.
- Some early homes had cedar shakes, and the color palette included XXX and Lime Green. (!)
- A water shortage plagued the area between 1950 and 1954 until two wells were dug to serve Bonnie Acres, Canterbury Gardens, and Cambridge Village.
- Though known today as a treed area, overhead views of the area in the earlier days do not show as many trees as are here now.
- Chicken coops and livestock are strictly forbidden in Cambridge Village. But technically, aluminum and vinyl siding isn't allowed either! (neither were invented yet when the deed restrictions were registered.)
- One former resident noted that at one time years ago, the planned I-696 freeway was being considered to go down Catalpa which seems incredibly inappropriate.

**Nice Weather** means opportunities for theft increase...make sure to keep doors locked on home and car. Keep watch, and report ANY suspicious activity immediately to the police, (248) 796-5500. If you don't take care, you will be a victim!

## HOME COLOR TIPS

A blog from Cranbrook Village noted a website that has suggestions for mid-century colors, if you are interested in painting your house, garage, or trim in colors from the era of the 1950s. It includes interior colors too, though we guess the purple will not have many takers. The website is <http://retrorenovation.com/product-guides/paint-colors/>. The rest of the site is also interesting <http://retrorenovation.com/>.

## PAT WATSON RETIRES

After about 30 years of service on the board of the CVA, Pat Watson is retiring from her position at the City of Southfield and will be moving with her husband Robert to a new home in Northwest Michigan. Pat has resigned from the Board, and she will be missed, but she is excited to start her new adventure. Good Luck Pat! CVA Secretary Senora Leonard was appointed to serve on the Board.

## MORE ABOUT SOUTHFIELD

- Northland Center construction started in 1952 and opened March 22, 1954, the first stand-alone open-air shopping center in the nation, and featuring the second Hudson's in the world. This was on the proposed site of Lawrence Institute of Technology, then located in Highland Park, but they sold the land and moved two miles up Northwestern Hwy, which until the 1960s was a divided four-lane highway all the way from Wyoming Rd. to Orchard Lake Rd. (Oak Park tried to annex Northland, since it is in the Oak Park School District, but the coup failed. This may have pushed voters to move to cityhood a few years later.) (Pontiac Mall, later Summit Place, was the first indoor mall in Michigan, opened in 1962.)
- Lathrup Village became a city in 1953, Beverly Hills in 1957; Southfield elected a charter commission in 1957 who pushed cityhood for April 28, 1958.
- One of the original councilmen was John Hollywood, President-Elect of the Southfield Rotary Club, and a resident of the newly-developed Cambridge Village.
- Cambridge hosted the 1953 annual Builders' Idea Home on 11 Mile Rd., but other homes were located on 9 Mile (1955), and in Cranbrook Village (1956, 1957, 1958).
- Annie Lathrup School (on Southfield Rd.) was open 1927-1976, Simms (East Southfield school) on Pierce remained open until 1980 and is now a park. Southfield High School opened in 1951.

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